



Asparagus is a member of the Lily family. It has no fat, no cholesterol, and is low in sodium. **Asparagus** is a nutrient-dense food which is high in Folic Acid and is a good source of potassium, fiber, vitamin B6, vitamins A and C, and thiamin.

Asparagus can grow over five inches in twenty four hours! The outdoor temperature determines how much time between each picking. Early in the season, there may be 4-5 days between pickings and as the days and nights get warmer, a particular field may have to be picked every 24 hours! The larger the diameter, the better the quality!

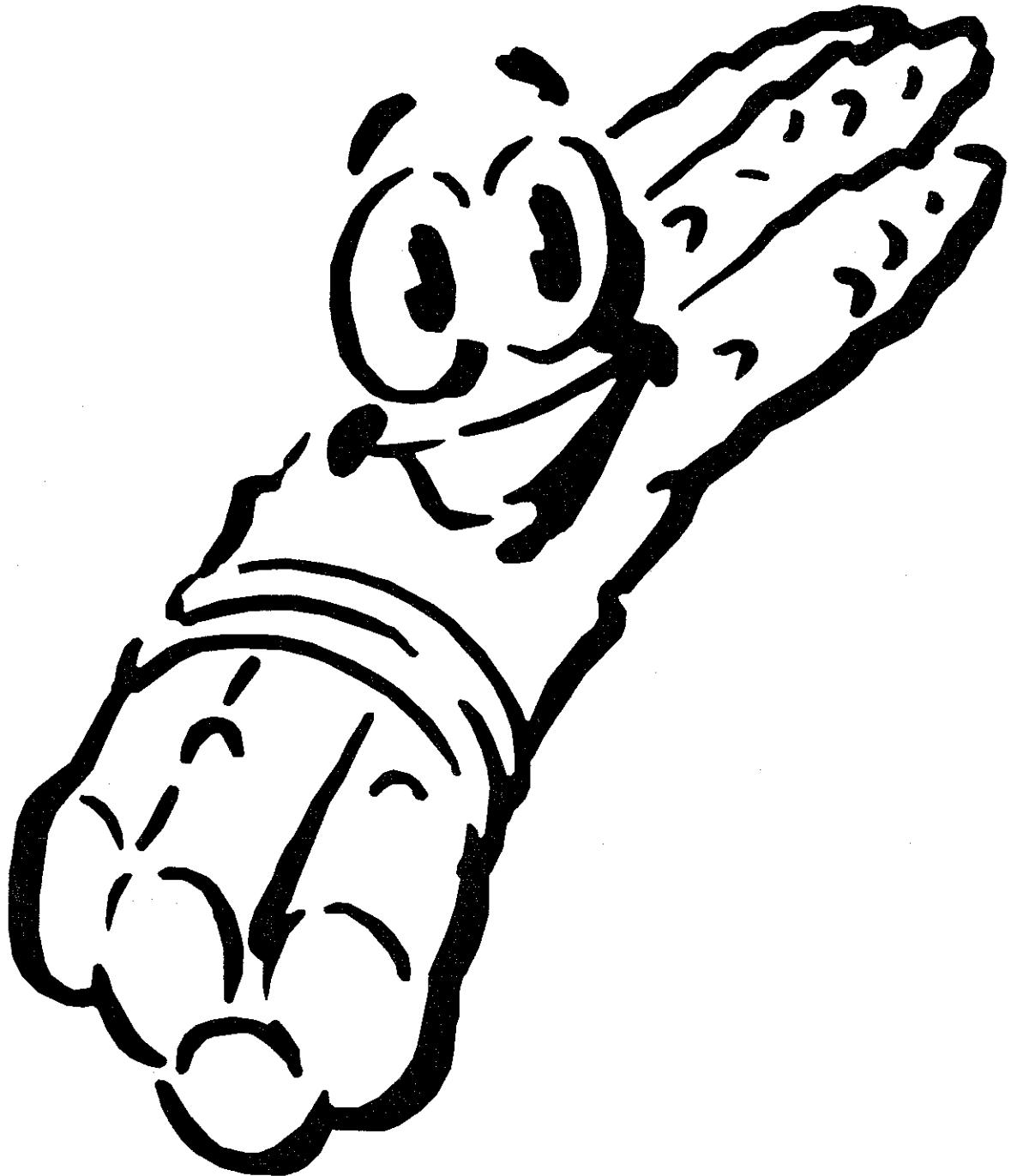
The harvest season for Idaho **asparagus** is typically early April through May. The warm spring days and cool nights provide perfect growing conditions for this perennial crop. After cutting, **asparagus** is hydro-cooled to keep it fresh, and when packed for shipping it is placed on a moisture pad to retain the freshness.

This spring, try replacing a more traditional side with Idaho **asparagus** and reap the benefits of healthy eating and great fresh flavor.

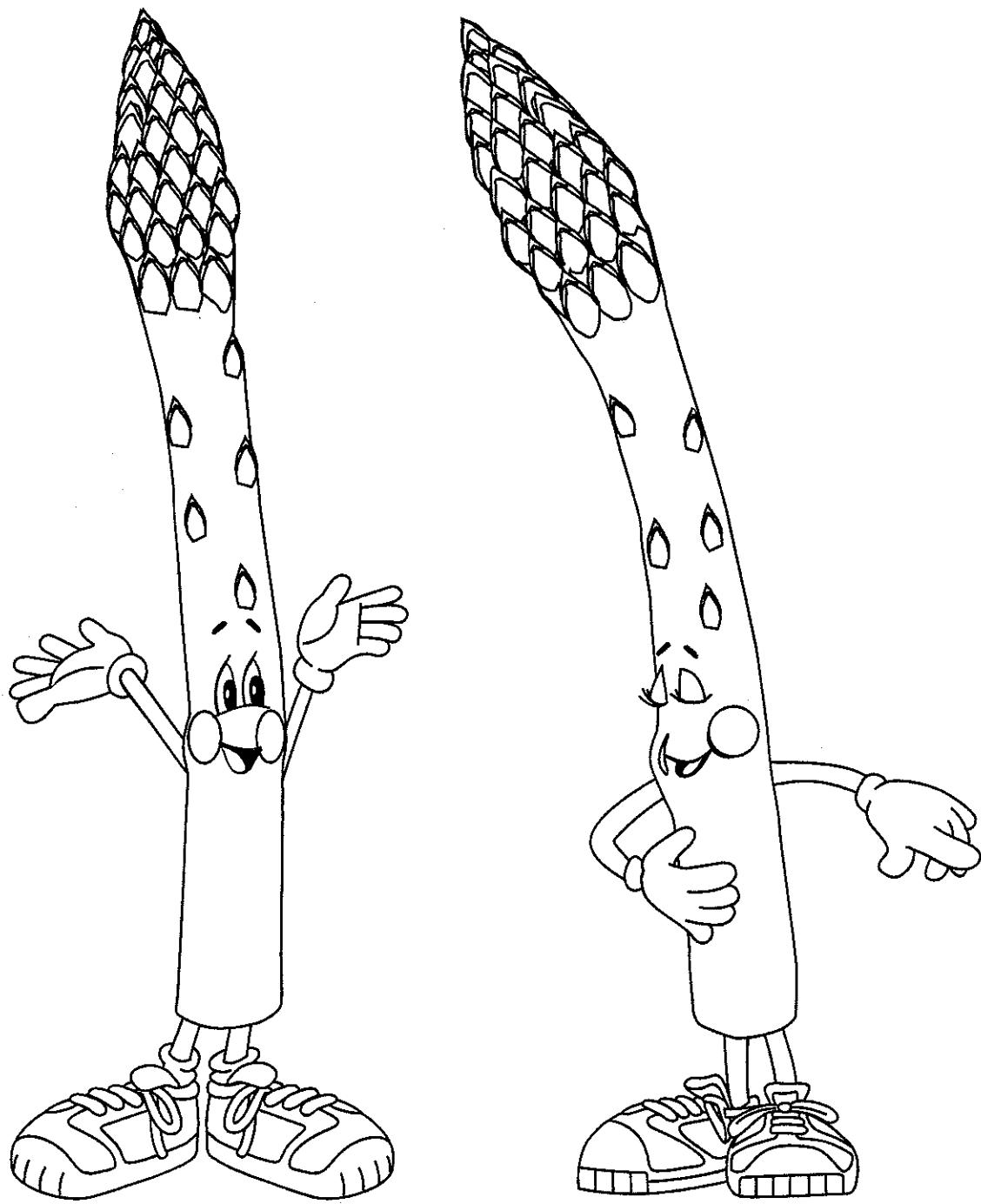


For the freshest **asparagus**, look for the Idaho Preferred® logo.





ASPARAGUS!



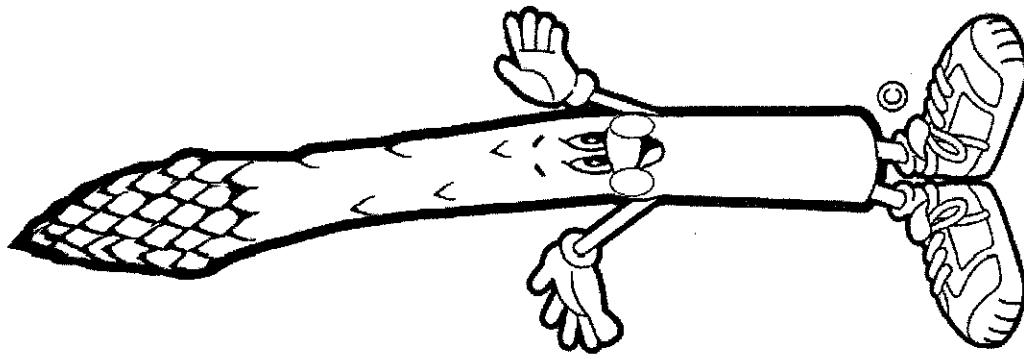
Annie & Arthur Asparagus ©

Fun Facts About Asparagus

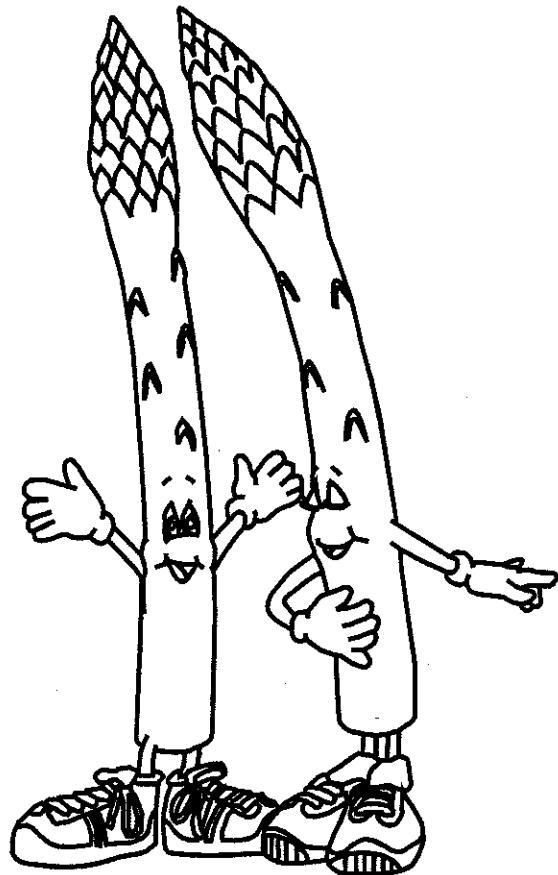
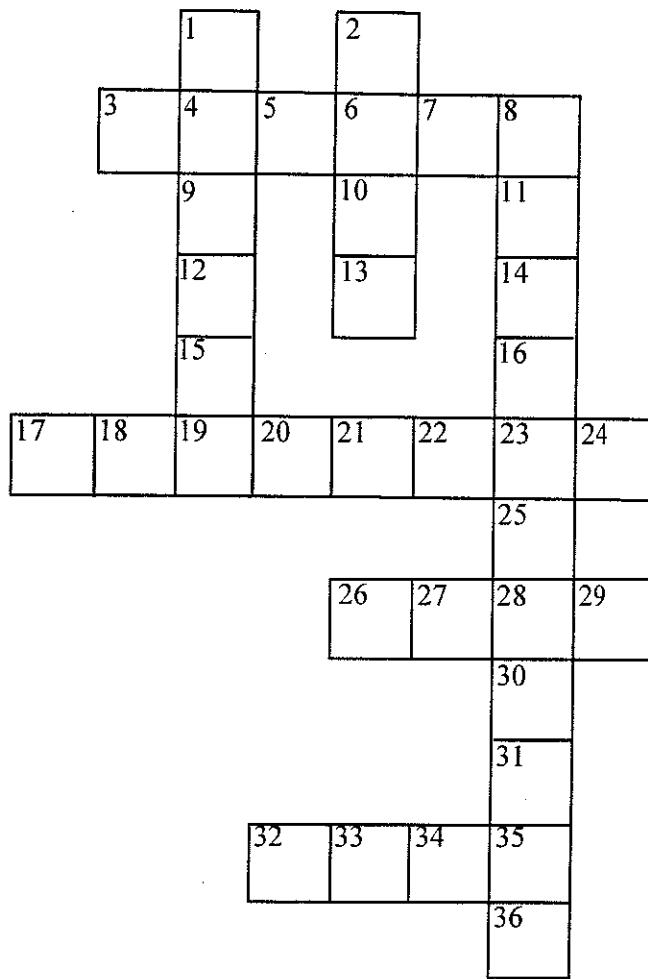
My name is Annie Asparagus.

Did you know that...?

- Asparagus is a vegetable.
- Asparagus was first raised in Greece about 2,500 years ago!
- The name asparagus is Greek for "stalk" or "shoot." Look at a piece of asparagus and you'll understand why!
- The scientific name for asparagus is *Asparagus officinalis*.
- Asparagus is a member of the lily family and is related to onions, leeks, and garlic.
- "Martha Washington" is one of the most popular varieties of green asparagus. Do you know who it was named after? George Washington's wife!
- There are three types of asparagus—green, white, and purple. Green is the most common in the United States, while the white variety is very popular in Europe.
- Green asparagus has its color thanks to the process known as "photosynthesis." Do you know what that is? It's when sunlight produces a substance called chlorophyll in the cells of plants. The chlorophyll in the cells of the plant gives asparagus its green color.
- White asparagus has no chlorophyll because it is kept underneath the soil where the sunlight cannot reach it.
- California grows about 80 percent of all the asparagus grown in the United States.
- More than 50,000 tons of asparagus covering more than 30,000 acres are grown in California every year. That's a lot of asparagus!
- Ninety percent of asparagus is eaten fresh; only 10 percent is canned or frozen.
- Asparagus is a favorite vegetable in the spring.
- Five medium spears of asparagus count as one serving of your 5 A Day.
- One serving of asparagus contains just 16 calories and is a good source of folate and vitamin K.
- The Spanish word for asparagus is *esparago*.
- The French word for asparagus is *asperge*.
- The Italian word for asparagus is *'asparago*.
- The German word for asparagus is *Spargel*.



Asparagus Crossword Fun



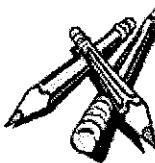
Across

3. Asparagus spears are harvested in _____.
17. Asparagus is a good source of _____.
26. After being harvested, asparagus continues to _____.
32. Asparagus is one way to get your _____ a day.

Down

1. The name, asparagus, comes from the Greek language meaning "_____ or "shoot".
2. Asparagus is a member of the _____ family.
8. King Louis XIV had gardeners grow asparagus in _____ so he could enjoy asparagus year round.

DID YOU KNOW?



MATCH THE WORDS
AND ANSWERS
BELOW...

Asparagus is a perennial member of the Lily family that also includes onions, leeks and garlic. Tiny plants called crowns or roots are planted in a furrow and it takes a cycle of three years before a field can be harvested nearly every day for the full season of 60 - 90 days. There is the growing stage, the fern stage and the dormant or "sleep" stage, all are needed so the asparagus plants can grow big and strong.

In the spring, workers walk the furrows and select the stalks that are ready to harvest and cut them with a special long-handled knife. The worker keeps holding as many asparagus spears between his fingers as he can until he can't hold any more. Then he lays them in a bunch on top of the ground. Other workers come with a tractor and pick up the bunches, load them in a sled on the tractor and take them to a packing shed.

The spears are washed, trimmed and sorted by hand to the various sizes - jumbo, extra large, large, standard and small. They are packed in wood crates or cardboard cartons. Space is left on the top of the box because asparagus will still grow! The asparagus is given a chlorine ice bath through a hydro cooler and then stored in cold rooms until sold.

The farmer is proud of his fresh asparagus. People especially like to eat asparagus at Easter time, but it really is a good vegetable to eat all the time. It has a lot of good things in it that help your body to be healthy. The Five-a-Day program thinks asparagus is great!

Asparagus, or 'gras as the farmers call it, is good to eat and good for you!

CAN YOU MATCH THE WORDS BELOW ON THE LEFT WITH THE ANSWERS TO THE RIGHT?

PERENNIAL	Someone who tells you that eating 5 vegetables and/or fruits a day help keep you healthy
CROWN	Lives from year to year
FURROW	A "slang" word for asparagus
HARVEST	Plants that grow from bulbs
CRATE	Gathering the crop
HYDROCOOLER	Sleep
CHLORINE	Natural ingredients found in foods necessary for our Bodies to grow
FARMER	Asparagus plant
VEGETABLE	Increase in size
FIVE-A-DAY	Someone who grows food
VITAMINS	
'GRAS	

STALK	Spears collected together
GREEN	Asparagus spear
LILY	Container for asparagus with open spaces to provide air circulation
BULB	Trench in the earth made by a plow
GROW	Produced by letting an asparagus spear grow until it stops growing
FERN	Ice water bath machine
DORMANT	Something to eat that is produced by plants
BUNCH	Mixed with water to help destroy germs
	Underground bud that sends out roots
	Color of asparagus

ASPARAGUS IS... GOOD FOR YOU!



UNSCRAMBLE
WORDS FOUND
BELOW...

Nutrition is important for everybody, and "every body." Asparagus is a good vegetable because it is packed with important stuff that helps our bodies to be healthy. When we eat asparagus, a normal serving is around 5 spears. Look what's in there.....

Vitamin C

We need 60 milligrams per day and asparagus is a significant source. This vitamin helps our body heal and withstand injury and infections. It helps increase the amount of iron absorbed by our body and helps fight cancer.

Folacin

We need 400 milligrams per day. Did you know asparagus contains more folacin than any other fruit or vegetable? Folacin is important for blood cell reproduction, helps to prevent some birth defects and helps prevent some cancers.

Thiamine

We need 1.5 milligrams per day. Asparagus is a significant source of this B-1 vitamin. It makes it possible for us to obtain energy from the food we eat, helps our cells reproduce and transmits nerve impulses.

Vitamin B-6

We need 2 milligrams per day. Asparagus is a significant source of this B-6 vitamin. It is important in making proteins that help us grow and heal as well as give us energy. It protects against disease and keeps us healthy.

Fiber

We need 3+ grams per day. Fiber is found only in plant foods. Fiber is needed by the intestines to help our body absorb the nutrients in a timely manner from the food we eat and carries waste out of our body.

Sodium

We need 5 milligrams per day. Asparagus is in the lowest category for sodium. It is an essential nutrient we can't live without because it is necessary to transmit nerve impulses, help muscles contract and expand and it plays a part in digesting and metabolizing foods. BUT, too much is not good!

Potassium

Asparagus is a significant source of potassium. It is needed to help regulate blood pressure, releases energy within the muscle cells and works with magnesium to regulate heart functions.

UNSCRAMBLE BELOW, THE WORDS FOUND ABOVE

SMARG	-----
TIRINNOUT	-----
OLIRCASE	-----
SITMUPASO	-----
MODUSI	-----
CALFNIO	-----
NIMHAITE	-----
BIREF	-----
MATVNICI	-----
EROPNIT	-----
TEELHCOLOSR	-----
LILIMARMSG	-----

ASPARAGUS WORD - FIND



ALLEY
APRIL
ASPARAGUS
CAESAR ASPARAGUSTUS
CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA GUS
CHEFS
CRAFTS
CROWNS
DUCKS
EASTER
FAMILY
FARMER
FERN
FESTIVAL

FIVE-A-DAY
FOLACIN
FOOD
FRESH
FUN
FURROW
GLUTATHIONE
GRAS
GREEN
HARVEST
KID ASPARADO
KIDS
KNIFE
LAKE
LASSIE

LILY
PARENT
PIERRE A GUSTE,
PERENNIAL
ROOT
SHOOT
SPEAR
SPROUT
STALK
STOCKTON
THIAMINE
TRACTOR
UUM
GOOD
VITAMIN C

